

*** NETANSWERS INTERNET EXTRA ***

For the week of January 12, 1998

Do you publish a newsletter, flyers or create advertising? Does your web page look more than a little bleak? The Internet is rife with archives of clip art, photos and fonts that you can download and use to spice up your publications. This column tells where to find them and what pitfalls to avoid.

=*=*= A PUBLISHER'S CLEARINGHOUSE =*=*=

So you're looking for fonts, clip art, and stock photos? Sure, you can drive to the nearest software store and buy one of those CD-ROMs packed with a million graphics and fonts. But: a) you only need a couple of really good ones and b) it's 3 AM and the software store won't be open for a while.

The solution is on the Internet, where both professional publishers and amateur artists can delve into countless archives of clip art, fonts and photographs.

First of all, start at <http://www.clipart.com>, a meta-index to clip art sites on the Internet. Here you'll find links to hundreds of other sites, many of which specialize in specific kinds of graphics: nature images, textures to use as the backgrounds of your web pages, karate clip art, religious images and so on. Yahoo has an impressive index to clip art sites as well, at http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Graphics/Clip_Art/.

It can take some digging to find the perfect graphic for your needs, but rest assured it's out there...somewhere.

Likewise, the Internet is home to font archives galore. You can buy professional-quality fonts from companies like Bitstream (<http://www.bitstream.com>) and have them delivered to your computer and ready to use in a matter of minutes. Free fonts abound, too, from sources such as Fontaholics Anonymous (<http://home1.gte.net/tiaralyn/fontmain.htm>). This site offers a dizzying array of fonts as well as utilities for tweaking them.

ChunkStore (<http://www.chunk.com/>) sells fonts and also offers a selection of free ones. Yahoo's index to font sites is at http://www.yahoo.com/Arts/Design_Arts/Graphic_Design/Typography/Typefaces/.

Graphics hounds may appreciate one of the commercial graphics sites. My personal favorite, ArtToday (<http://www.arttoday.com>) offers more than 650,000 pieces of clip art -- from stock photographs to line art -- as well as 1,700 fonts. Besides its huge inventory of graphics, ArtToday's best feature is its search engine: type a description of what you're looking for and watch as related images appear. ArtToday makes it simple to hone in on the perfect graphics. Unlimited access to ArtToday costs \$17.95 annually. Non-subscribers can search its database and sample its wares for free.

-.-.- Beware -.-.-

Sometimes there's no such thing as a free lunch, and other times free lunches just aren't that yummy, so I'll share the downsides of getting your clip art and fonts from the Net. The commercial collections (like ArtToday) are usually very careful

about avoiding these problems. Some of the freebie sites, too, are steadfast about keeping things safe. Others, not so much.

There are many, many clip art sites on the Web: some are professional, others are amateurs' collections. As you troll the sites for graphics, it is important to remember that just because something is on the Web doesn't mean it's yours to use. A clip art site that I visited recently offered among its collection dozens of images of cartoon characters -- Calvin and Hobbes and so on. Those characters are owned by someone -- probably someone with lawyers -- and are certainly a violation of copyright. Using them in your newsletter or on your web site could land you in a ton of trouble. Some amateur clip art archivists don't understand (or care about) intellectual property rights, so you need to pay careful attention to them.

It isn't always so obvious when an image has been purloined from its rightful owner. After all, when you download a picture of a hummingbird, how are you supposed to tell who created it? If the image isn't signed and doesn't come with a text file claiming ownership, you're left guessing. In this case, you're at the mercy of the site where you found the image. It is wise to check the site for a statement of integrity, an assertion that the material was created by the site's owner, is in the public domain, or is otherwise available for use. If you're unsure, e-mail the webmaster with your concerns. If you're still unsure, play it safe and don't use that material.

Free fonts can be tricky, too. Although a font may look perfect at first glance, you may find that it is not that great once it's installed on your computer. It takes time and talent to create a good typeface -- and, well, not everyone who tries to create them has both. You may find, for instance, display fonts that only feature uppercase letters. Or fonts that lack less frequently used characters like the caret and accented letters. There's usually not a good way to tell if a font is complete before downloading it: all I can suggest is to thoroughly test the fonts that you download before basing your new corporate identity on that typeface.

==*== SITES MENTIONED IN THIS ISSUE ==*==

ArtToday: <http://www.arttoday.com>

BitStream: <http://www.bitstream.com>

ChunkStore: <http://www.chunk.com>

The ClipArt Directory: <http://www.clipart.com>

Fontaholics Anonymous: <http://home1.gte.net/tiaralyn/fontmain.htm>

Yahoo's index to clip art sites: http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Graphics/Clip_Art/

Yahoo's index to font sites: http://www.yahoo.com/Arts/Design_Arts/Graphic_Design/Typography/Typefaces/

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The NetAnswers Internet Extra is free to all CompuServe members. It's available in the Internet Community Forum -- GO INETCOM and look in file library 11, "NetAnswers".

Got comments or ideas for future newsletter issues? We want to hear 'em. Just send a message to savetz@compuserve.com (74774,2725).

I can't get no satisfaction, I can't got no girlie action. I've tried and I've tried, but I'm...copyright 1998 by Kevin Savetz.